

DRAFT

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
PUBLIC USE PLAN**



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U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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DRAFT

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

PUBLIC USE PLAN

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PUBLIC USE PLAN

SUMMARY

This plan describes the specific strategies the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will use for implementing public use programs at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMANWR). These programs are designed to achieve objectives for Refuge Goals Number 3 Environmental Education; 4 Wildlife-Dependent Recreation; and 6 Program Support established in the RMANWR Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) (FWS, 1996). This plan covers on-site programs to be presented at RMANWR, and does not address all outreach and off-site activities related to outreach objectives in Refuge Goal Numbers 2 and 3. The principal strategies provide visitor services for the following programs:

- Weekend Drop-In programs at the Refuge Visitor Center and walking trail system for wildlife interpretation, observation and photography.
- Staff-led interpretive programming for the general public
- Guided tours providing wildlife interpretation and photography
- Fishing programs including a permitted program for the general public and special programs for youth and people with disabilities
- Staff and teacher-led on-site environmental education programs
- Special events

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Refuge Overview

RMANWR was established pursuant to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act of 1992 (P. L. 102-402) (Act). That statute determined that the U.S. Army's Rocky Mountain Arsenal would become a National Wildlife Refuge following environmental cleanup of contamination resulting from decades of chemical weapons and pesticide manufacturing. The Act also directed that the Arsenal be managed "as if it were" a refuge, subject to the cleanup. The technologies used for disposal of wastes from prior chemical manufacturing, as well as spills and other releases resulted in contamination of soil, water and structures at the Arsenal. Rocky Mountain Arsenal is currently undergoing a major environmental remediation program, led by the U.S. Army, in cooperation with the Service and Shell Oil Company, and under the regulatory oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Tri-County Health Department. The cleanup is being performed under provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 and other applicable environmental laws. Details of the on-post cleanup are

found in the 1996 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal On-Post Operable Unit. The cleanup is scheduled for completion in 2011.

Under provisions of Section 2(a) of the Act, all 17,000 acres of Rocky Mountain Arsenal became an overlay National Wildlife Refuge in 1992 with the Service exercising secondary jurisdiction on Army property. Public use for wildlife-dependent recreation activities at Rocky Mountain Arsenal were initiated even earlier, under provisions of a 1989 Cooperative Agreement between the Service and the Army. Beginning in 1989, the Service provided a wide variety of tours, interpretive and environmental education programs and fishing programs. Between 1989 and 2000, more than 400,000 members of the public visited RMANWR.

The Service has prepared a succession of "Visitor Plans" since the initiation of public use at RMANWR. Following completion of the CMP in 1996, a Visitor Access Plan was approved in January 1999. During most of the 1990's, the cleanup was concentrating on studies to determine the nature and extent of contamination. In the initial years following the ROD, the focus was on remediation of relatively small areas of contamination in the Arsenal's buffer zone. During that time, there were few if any, remedy issues that affected a well-coordinated and 100% staff-led public use program.

By 2000, the remedy had progressed into more challenging projects including digging and removing structures in the highly contaminated "industrial core" of the Arsenal. Projects included those with higher potential to encounter issues, such as unexploded ordnance, chemical agent and odors that could impact visitors and the public perception of the safety of public use at the Refuge. In October 2000, the first of ten M-139 bomblets containing GB nerve agent was discovered during remediation of a debris pile in Section 36 of the Arsenal. That discovery of chemical weapons resulted in suspension of public visitation for a period of two years.

An Interim Plan for Weekend Visitor Access was approved in September 2002, and in October, 2002, Refuge public use resumed on weekends only. That plan was amended in the spring of 2003 to add fishing programs for disabled youth on Friday evenings, following daily completion of invasive remedy work. Between October 2002 and June 2004, more than 12,000 visitors participated in wildlife-dependent recreation at RMANWR under the weekend program. Through the use of appropriate signs, literature, personal education, supervision and law enforcement, the Service prevented visitors from trespassing into contaminated areas, active remediation sites and other unauthorized areas.

1.2 Purpose and Need for this Plan

Since October 2000, significant progress has been made in the remedial work at Rocky Mountain Arsenal. The principal manufacturing facilities, South Plants and North Plants, have been demolished and placed in on-site landfills along with odorous soils from South Plants. The remedy has largely “collapsed” into a footprint of three square miles in the core area of the Arsenal, primarily on lands that will be retained by the U. S. Army and never transferred to the Service. It is anticipated that by the end of federal Fiscal Year 2004, all projects with any reasonable potential to encounter discarded chemical agent munitions will be complete, and the cleanup will enter a phase involving 18 months of clean construction work. It is anticipated that by the end of 2004, the Basin F Wastepile, Former Basin F soils in Section 26, and Lime Basins in Section 36 will be the only remaining waste streams to be remediated. Following placement of those wastes in an on-site triple-lined landfill by 2008, the final three years of the cleanup will consist entirely of clean construction work to build caps and cover systems over the disposal sites.

In January 2004, nearly 5,000 acres of Arsenal land were deleted from the National Priorities List of CERCLA sites by the EPA. On April 2, 2004, primary administrative jurisdiction for most of the deleted lands was transferred from the Army to the Service. Under the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding between FWS/DOI and the Army, the Service is now the lead agency partner on the transferred lands. RMANWR is now comprised of two jurisdictional areas (Appendix A), the transferred area of primary jurisdiction (hereinafter referred to as the Refuge), and the remaining overlay area of secondary jurisdiction (hereinafter referred to as the Arsenal).

As the remedy has successfully and safely progressed, it is once again necessary to revise public use programs and procedures for visitation. This plan supercedes the Service’s Interim Plan for Weekend Visitor Access (Sept. 2002) and all previous visitor/public use plans. This plan applies only to the Refuge and public use programs conducted by the Service. It does not change any provisions for public access to the Arsenal or any visitation sponsored by the Remediation Venture Office (RVO) or other entities at Rocky Mountain Arsenal/RMANWR, which are contained in the RVO Health and Safety Standing Operating Procedures. This plan does not cover programs offered by the Service’s National Eagle and Wildlife Property Repositories, also located at the Arsenal. As used herein, “Service staff” or “Service programs”, means employees and programs of Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

This plan will be effective for implementation upon approval. Portions of this plan that deal with weekday visitation will not be implemented before completion of the clearance of geophysical targets identified in the Section 36 Balance of Areas project by qualified UXO personnel. Specific programs, such as weekday visitation, may be suspended as necessary, to insure that remedial activities do not impact visitors.

1.3 Visitor Safety

Safety of the visiting public has been and continues to be the highest priority for the Service. The Service acknowledges that RMANWR is not a typical refuge and that special provisions are necessary to ensure that Refuge public use does not expose visitors to any real or perceived excess health or safety risks. Since the inception of public visitation in the late 1980s, there have been no known instance of visitor exposure to hazardous items or materials. The Service's primary goal is to ensure that record is maintained as RMANWR continues to its transition from CERCLA cleanup site to National Wildlife Refuge. A list of Health and Safety documents and programs that are referred to and included by reference, in this plan, can be found in Appendix B.

As in the prior (September, 2002) plan, procedures are in place to protect visitors during unsafe weather conditions. Daily on-site coordination with the RVO's Remedy Execution, Health and Safety and Management Teams ensures that all established and proven-effective safety measures are followed consistently.

All public use programs under this plan will be conducted during weekdays or on weekends, primarily during daylight hours, but with flexible times for early morning and some night and evening activities. The Service maintains the option to suspend or cancel public use programs at any time for health and safety or wildlife conservation reasons. In addition, the Service, in consultation with the Army, may suspend or cancel public use programs if deemed necessary for compatibility with remedy operations.

The principal goal of this plan is to provide quality opportunities for the public to experience the resources of the Refuge in a manner that is fully protective of human health. Service public use programs will be conducted only on the Refuge and primarily in the Southern Tier Public Use Area (Appendix C).

To ensure the safety of visitors participating in Refuge Public Use programs, the following apply to all programs in this Plan:

- The programs will be managed by Service personnel, including paid staff and volunteer staff who receive extensive training on site history, job specific tasks, emergency procedures, and Incident Reporting Procedures.
- All weekday programs will be by reservation and will be staff-led or staff supervised. Self-guided visitor use of trails and interpretive venues will occur on weekends only.
- All public use programs that may occur in Refuge areas outside the Southern Tier Public Use Area will be staff-led and by reservation only.
- Children under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult to participate in all programs. This includes chaperones for school, scout and other group programs. Dropping off children at the Refuge is not allowed.

- Visitor vehicles may only enter the Refuge at the South Gate and may only travel on the Refuge on C Street, directly to and from the Visitor Center.
- All public use programs conducted under this plan will be recorded in the Weekly Calendar of Events (Appendix D), and submitted in the RVO's SafeRac computerized activity coordination program.

1.4 Refuge/Refuge System Purposes, Mission, Goals

1.4.1 Refuge Purposes: Per the Act, the establishment purposes of RMANWR are:

- To conserve and enhance populations of fish, wildlife, and plants within the Refuge, including populations of waterfowl, raptors, passerines, and marsh and water birds.
- To conserve species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and species that are candidates for such listing.
- To provide maximum fish and wildlife oriented public uses at levels compatible with the conservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat.
- To provide opportunities for compatible environmental and land use education.
- To conserve and enhance the land and water of the Refuge in a manner that will conserve and enhance the natural diversity of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats.
- To protect and enhance the quality of aquatic habitat within the Refuge.
- To fulfill international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish, wildlife and their habitats.

1.4.2 Mission Statements:

- The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is: "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans" (P. L. 105-57).
- "The mission of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is to enhance and sustain fish and wildlife and their habitats and to provide the public with meaningful opportunities to experience nature near an urban area. In addition, the Refuge will provide urban dwellers with the opportunity to see a variety of wildlife close to home." (CMP)

1.4.3 Goals: As they relate to public use, the goals of the Refuge and Refuge System are:

RMANWR:

- Goal No. 3: Develop environmental education and outreach opportunities for urban communities to nurture an appreciation of nature which ultimately results in fostering environmental consciousness which promotes conservation of our natural resources.
- Goal No. 4: Provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreational activities.
- Goal No. 6: Develop a program support system to provide facilities, funding, and resources necessary to accomplish Refuge purposes.

National Wildlife Refuge System:

- To provide an understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife ecology and man's role in his environment, to provide Refuge visitors with high quality, safe, wholesome, and enjoyable recreational experiences oriented toward wildlife to the extent these activities are compatible with the purposes for which the Refuge was established.

2.0 INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Per the CMP, the following themes will be used in development and execution of specific interpretive and environmental education programs:

2.1 History

Interpretive and Environmental Education programs will interpret the history of the Refuge. The historical interaction between land, people, and technology offers many lessons for taking responsibility for this Refuge and other lands.

2.2 Wildlife

Refuge programming will emphasize the benefits that wildlife provide to the quality of human life, and seek to instill an appreciation of wildlife in urban residents.

2.3 Ecosystem Connections

The message that the natural world consists of dynamic and interactive systems is important. Refuge interpretive and educational programming will strive to emphasize that connectivity and the roles that humans play in it - either to the benefit or detriment of wildlife and other natural resources.

2.4 Consequences and Responsibilities

Through Refuge interpretive and educational programs, students and the general public will learn that understanding and working with natural processes is more responsible and efficient in the long run, than acting “against the grain” of natural ecological processes.

2.5 Stewardship

The Service, in serving as the Refuge’s steward must carefully manage resources of the Refuge and its visitors to provide an example of excellence in natural resource stewardship.

2.6 Storyline and Subthemes

The Storyline and subthemes for delivering the Refuge interpretive and educational theme messages is found at Appendix C of the CMP and is incorporated herein by reference.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

RMANWR is completely described in Chapter 1. The Site and Its Context, of the CMP, which is incorporated here by reference. The public can also obtain a thorough description of RMANWR, its resources and management via the Refuge website at <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov>.

4.0 FACILITIES

4.1 South Gate

Located on C Street, just north of the intersection of 56th Avenue and Havana Street, this facility is the main entrance for visitors attending public use programs or meetings at the Visitor Center.

4.2 Visitor Center

This facility serves as an orientation and check-in point for visitors participating in programs, meetings, and other Service activities. Interpretive exhibits provide information about the site’s history, remediation, and wildlife. A wildlife learning lab offers hands-on activities. All trails with exception of the Wetlands Trail can be accessed on foot from the Visitor Center.

4.3 Tour Route

The tour route is used to interpret the Arsenal’s history, remediation, and wildlife. The route runs from the Visitor Center south near the Lakes and along the High Line Canal Lateral (Appendix E). All tours are guided by Service staff or volunteers and are conducted using Service vehicles. Rattlesnake Hill and other venues north of 7th Avenue are not included in the tour program.

4.4 Lakes Mary and Ladora

The Lakes are located south and southeast of the Visitor Center and are accessible by trails or shuttle. They provide fishing, environmental education, interpretation, and wildlife observation opportunities. Access to Lake Mary is available year round. Access to Lake Ladora is restricted during the winter months when bald eagles are present.

4.5 Interpretive Trails

Several trails are available for visitors to hike. The trails provide opportunities for photography, wildlife observation, and interpretive programs. Trails that radiate out from the Visitor Center include Lake Mary, Prairie Loop, Lake Ladora, Woodland, and Rod and Gun Club Trails. These trails are located in Sections 2, 11, and 12 (Appendix F). The Wetlands, located in Section 7, support a variety of wetland fauna and flora and provide an excellent interpretive and environmental education opportunity. The site includes a shuttle stop and a two-mile trail system that encompasses three wetlands. The Wetland Loop Trail is accessible by shuttle or school bus only. Some trails are open on a seasonal basis and all trails are subject to closure depending on weather, wildlife, and maintenance needs. Trails are posted with interpretive, directional, and regulatory signs or markers. Future trails will open to visitors as they are constructed.

4.6 Wildlife Watch

The Wildlife Watch (formerly the Eagle Watch) is located along the East Perimeter Road in Section 5 and will be open only for staff or volunteer guided interpretive programs.

5.0 ACCESS CONTROL

During weekdays, visitors and groups will access the Refuge through the South Gate located at 56th Avenue and Havana Street. The South Gate will be staffed during normal business hours. All visitors and groups participating in scheduled weekday programs will be required to stop at the South Gate where they will be issued a red vehicle pass to be displayed in the windshield (Appendix G). This pass will allow access only to the Visitor Center where Service staff or a Refuge volunteer will meet the visitor or group. The pass will include the date and name of the group scheduled. The pass, and this information will be provided to the South Gate staff prior to the start of the program. South Gate staff will notify Service staff or the Refuge volunteer by phone that the visitor or group is on their way to the Visitor Center. Weekday programs that require a red pass include Guided Interpretive Tours, Guided Interpretive Programs, Scout Programs, and Environmental Education Programs.

During weekends, the South Gate will not be staffed during drop-in visitation hours. Signage will direct visitors to the Visitor Center where they will be required to check-in. On weekends, C Street will be gated immediately north of the Visitor Center driveway to prevent visitors from accessing unauthorized areas.

6.0 ACCESSIBILITY

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities provided by the Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. The Service has made accommodations for accessibility for public programs and facilities wherever possible. The majority of the Refuge trail system meets Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The trolley-tram and bus, which are used for site tours, are both equipped with wheelchair lifts.

7.0 PUBLIC USE PROGRAMS

All Public Use programs are evaluated and reviewed on a seasonal or yearly basis to assess management and/or operational needs, staffing levels, and improvements necessary to maintain the best quality possible for educational, interpretive, and recreational programs and experiences for visitors. Program recommendations are provided to the Refuge Manager for final approval prior to implementation.

7.1 Weekend Visitor Programs and Procedures

7.1.1 Drop-in Program

The Southern Tier Public Use Area is open every weekend without reservation on a drop-in basis. Weekend program hours vary to accommodate seasonal and program changes.

Only individuals in motor vehicles or riding on motorcycles will be allowed through the South Gate. Bicyclists and pedestrians are not allowed through the South Gate.

The drop-in program affords visitors an opportunity to use the trail system and to learn about the Arsenal's history, remediation, and wildlife through self-guided activities and exhibits at the Visitor Center. Activities available to visitors include wildlife observation, photography, hiking, seasonal fishing, and interactive explorations of nature and wildlife in the Visitor Center Learning Lab.

7.1.2 Drop-In Program Procedures

Visitors are permitted to drive to the Visitor Center exclusively on C Street. All other roads will be gated, making them inaccessible to visitors. These gates are located to the east and west sides of C Street on 6th Avenue, the Havana Canal road and the perimeter road on the east side of C Street just north of the South Gate, across C Street just to the north of the Visitor Center access road, and at the end of the Tram Loop to the east of the Visitor Center (Appendix H). The South Gate will be used by visiting public, Refuge volunteers, and staff during open hours.

Visitors are required to sign-in at the Visitor Center reception desk. Visitor Safety Fact Sheets (Appendix I) and a trail map which includes rules, regulations and emergency procedures (Appendix J) are made available to visitors. Visitors must stay on designated trails. Drop-in visitors will be informed of scheduled tours and programs and will be invited to participate, based on space availability.

Roving Interpreters on foot and/or mountain bikes monitor open trails. Roving Interpreters are trained in CPR, First Aid, and RMA Incident Reporting Procedures, in addition to completing emergency and job specific training. All Roving Interpreters are equipped with a first aid kit and radio. Service Law Enforcement Officers will provide additional weekend patrol coverage in Refuge areas.

Weather conditions are continuously monitored by Visitor Center staff using a NOAA weather alert radio. Program staff in the field also monitor weather conditions by keeping watch on the sky. Radio contact will be made to all program staff in the event severe weather warnings are issued by the National Weather Service over the weather alert radio. Program staff will give an air horn warning of two blasts at public use areas alerting visitors of the severe weather moving in. Roving Interpreters will immediately gather visitors from the trails, and following the evacuation routes (Appendix K) ensure they return to the Visitor Center until the severe weather has passed.

Regulatory, directional, and interpretive signs are posted along trail routes and roads. Visitors will be required to stay on designated trails. Signs located along the north side of 6th Avenue from D Street to F Street and along the eastern shore of Lake Ladora restrict visitor access (Appendix L). Refuge boundary signs delineate the exterior boundary of the Refuge (Appendix M).

During drop-in program hours, a shuttle may provide visitor pick-up and drop-off service from the Visitor Center to the Wetlands Loop Trail.

In the event of severe weather, a shuttle driver will proceed to the Lake Ladora and Wetlands Loop Trails and give a signal of two blasts on an air horn alerting all visitors to evacuate the trail and return to the shuttle. At the same time, Visitor Center Staff will signal visitors at Lake Mary with two air horn blasts alerting them to return to the Visitor Center. After recovering all visitors from the trails, the shuttle driver will return to the Visitor Center.

At the end of the day, program staff will conduct a final review of the trails to ensure all visitors have been cleared from the Southern Tier Public Use Area. The Service Lead (Weekend) ensures that all visitors have left the site for the day.

7.2 Guided Interpretive Tours

Guided interpretive tours of the Southern Tier Public Use Area may be offered year-round on weekdays and weekends. Tours for organized groups may be scheduled at various times during the day by reservation only during weekdays or weekends. Weekday, tours may be held at various times Monday through Friday. On weekends, tours will be offered at specific times for the public, and for organized groups by reservation only. Drop-in visitors who request to participate on a weekend tour, but do not have reservations, will be added if space is available. Tours are conducted using Service vehicles and are approximately two hours long. Tours consist of two parts: ½ hour at the Visitor Center, and a 1½ hour site tour.

7.2.1 Guided Interpretive Tour Procedures:

Reservations are made by phone to the Visitor Center at (303) 289-0930. A name, phone number, and the number of people in the group are recorded. Confirmation calls are made for each reservation entry at least 1½ days prior to the scheduled tour. Cancellations can occur up to the last minute if deemed necessary for safety considerations.

In general, tours are conducted using the trolley/tram, however other tour vehicles can be assigned depending on group size or other specific program needs.

Tour guides have emergency response and job specific training. All tour vehicles are equipped with a first aid kit and radio. All tours are staffed by personnel who are trained in CPR, First Aid and Incident Reporting Procedures.

The tour begins and concludes at the Visitor Center.

7.3 Fishing

Fishing season is from mid-April to mid-October in accordance with RMANWR fishing regulations. Lakes designated for fishing include Mary and Ladora. Access to Lake Ladora is limited to the south and west shores only. Anglers will not be permitted access to the north and east side of Lake Ladora.

7.3.1 Public Fishing Procedures:

Anglers must pre-qualify for fishing privileges by attending a ½ hour orientation session that is offered at the Visitor Center prior to and during the fishing season. The orientation covers site safety issues including General Fishing Information and Regulations (Appendix N) and the Recreation Fee Program. Once anglers have completed the orientation, they will be eligible to fish throughout the season.

The fishing program is strictly catch and release only.

A maximum of 60 anglers will be allowed on the lakes at any given time. Anglers 18 years and older must have completed the orientation program. As with all Refuge public use programs, children under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult when fishing.

Fishing is from the bank and by wading only. Bank fishing on Lake Ladora is restricted to specific sites identified in the regulations. Boats are not permitted. Anglers are not required to wear personal flotation devices (PFDs), however, adult and youth sized PFDs are available at the Visitor Center for anglers who want to borrow them.

Under this plan fishing will initially be offered with varying hours only on weekends. If sufficient staffing levels are achieved to safely manage a weekday fishing program this plan will be amended accordingly. Anglers enter through the South Gate using the procedures outlined above in Section 4.0.

All anglers must possess a valid State of Colorado fishing license and a Refuge fishing permit.

In the event of severe weather, anglers will follow the same procedures as outlined above in Section 6.1.2.

Anglers are allowed to access lakes via the trail system from the Visitor Center.

7.3.2 Special Fishing Procedures:

The Service provides recreational fishing opportunities for patients from Children's and Craig Hospitals and their family members. A partnership between the Service and the hospitals has existed since 1990. These programs are held only at Lake Mary on alternating Friday evenings after 4:00 pm. during the fishing season. This program may be extended to other special needs groups if staffing levels allow.

Access will be through the South Gate as stated in Section 4.0. Service staff or Refuge volunteers will meet the group at Lake Mary.

Reservations will be required for special fishing programs. Each hospital will be scheduled on a different Friday evening.

Service staff and Refuge volunteers will control all fishing activity ensuring rules and regulations are followed. All fishing is catch and release only.

Participants will be monitored, assisted and supervised by Service staff and Refuge volunteers equipped with a first aid kit and a radio.

Weather conditions are continuously monitored as outlined in Section 6.1.2.

Programs conclude at sunset. Service staff and Refuge volunteers will ensure that all participants leave the site through the South Gate.

7.4 Interpretive and Scout Programs

Interpretive and scout programs are conducted by Service staff or Refuge volunteers by reservation only. Programs are scheduled to run approximately 2 hours, but may extend up to 4 hours. If staffing levels allow, programs may be offered during the weekday with visitor access as outlined in Section 4.0. All program participants are required to meet at the Visitor Center.

Program topics vary from specific aspects of the site's remediation to wildlife species, habitat, photography, and bird watching. Most programs consist of a presentation at the Visitor Center, a field site visit, and also may include a tour. All tours and programs are limited to the Southern Tier Public Use Area.

7.4.1 Procedures

Reservations are made by phone. A name, phone number, and the number of people in the group are recorded. When participants make a reservation, they are advised of any special equipment or items needed for the program (e.g., sun screen, hat, water bottle, bike helmet, sturdy shoes, etc.).

Confirmation calls are made for each reservation entry at least 1½ days prior to the scheduled program.

All scout groups must provide one adult chaperone for every 10 scouts participating under age 18.

Staff program leaders are equipped with a radio and a first aid kit. All programs are staffed by personnel who are trained in CPR, First Aid, and Incident Reporting Procedures in addition to emergency and job specific training.

Participants enter through the South Gate and drive to the Visitor Center where they check-in.

8.0 Environmental Education Programs

Environmental education programs are offered to all schools. Program curriculum includes field-based learning, hands-on activities and teacher training workshops. Environmental Education programs include teacher-led and staff-led curricula. No more than one environmental education program will be scheduled per day and no more than three programs will be scheduled per week. Teacher-led and staff-led programs can be scheduled in any combination each week.

Environmental education programs also are provided through the Service's Cooperative Agreement with Adams County School District 14 and will be included in the schedule along

with teacher-led and staff-led programs. No more than one environmental education program will be held at a field site at any one time.

8.1.1 Teacher-led Environmental Education Program Procedures:

The Service takes reservations from educators beginning August 15 for fall/winter programs and January 15 for spring/summer programs. Each program may last up to four hours and may be scheduled Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Teacher-led programs will be conducted at the Wetlands Environmental Education site or Lake Mary. Participating teachers are required to attend an eight-hour training session which covers the Home Is Habitat curriculum and site safety procedures prior to their scheduled visit. The eight-hour teacher training session will be held once in the fall and once in the spring. A Refuge volunteer or Service staff will be provided to chaperone and assist each teacher during their on-site program.

The teacher's name, phone number, number of students, date of program, type of program, and type of transportation are recorded. All programs are entered in the Weekly Calendar of Events.

Teachers are informed that a minimum of one adult chaperone for every 10 students is required. If the number of chaperones is not provided, the group will be given a guided tour of the Refuge using the public tour route.

Teachers receive pre-visit packages that include a confirmation letter, details regarding the program, brochures, a checklist of needs for a successful trip, a map to the Refuge (Appendix O), and the Visitor Safety Fact Sheet.

Teachers are responsible for accounting for all students before, during, and after the program.

School groups enter through the South Gate in their bus or a leased bus and are directed by gate staff to the Visitor Center. A Refuge volunteer or Service staff will greet the group at the Visitor Center and provide the students with an introduction and orientation to the site. A radio is issued to the teacher. Then the group proceeds to the field site escorted by the Refuge volunteer or Service staff. Following the class, the Refuge volunteer or Service staff escorts the group back to the Visitor Center and conducts a wrap-up.

Upon conclusion of the program, the students are returned to the bus and leave via the South Gate.

If it is necessary to cancel a program, the teacher will be notified by phone as early as possible, prior to their arrival. If it is necessary to cancel a program already in progress instructions will be given by the Refuge volunteer or Service staff.

8.1.2 Staff-led Environmental Education Program Procedures

The Service takes reservations for staff-led programs beginning September 15 for fall/winter and February 15 for spring/summer programs. Teacher-led programs will have scheduling priority and staff-led programs will not be scheduled on days when there is a Home is Habitat teacher-led program already scheduled. Each program may last up to 2 ½ hours and may be scheduled Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 3:30 pm. Staff-led programs include curriculum for one tour/walk program and three field programs.

The tour/walk program is for students in kindergarten through second grade. The program consists of a 15 minute introduction in the Visitor Center followed by a one-hour staff-led nature walk and concludes with a 45 minute bus tour. All programs begin and end at the Visitor Center. Field programs are offered to students in third through twelfth grade. The program consists of a 15 minute introduction in the Visitor Center and a two-hour field activity/study at one of four locations within the Southern Tier Public Use Area. Field program locations include a prairie dog town at 6th Avenue and B Street, a prairie dog town at 6th Avenue and perimeter road, Lake Mary, and in The Wetlands in Section 7 (Appendix P). All programs begin and end at the Visitor Center.

The teacher's name, phone number, number of students, date of program, type of program, and the type of transportation are recorded. All programs are entered in the Weekly Calendar of Events.

Teachers may schedule a maximum of 40 students for staff-led programs.

Teachers are informed that a minimum of one adult chaperone for every 10 students is required. If the number of chaperones is not provided, the group will be given a tour of the Refuge using the public tour route.

Teachers receive pre-visit packages that include a confirmation letter, details regarding the program, pre-visit educational materials, brochures, a checklist of needs for a successful trip, a map to the Refuge, and the Visitor Safety Fact Sheet.

Students arrive by school transportation through the South Gate and are directed to the Visitor Center. Service staff or Refuge volunteers will meet the group at the Visitor Center.

Students are divided and assigned to a staff or volunteer program leader. A maximum of 20 students are assigned to one program leader.

If students are participating in the tour/walk program they are escorted to Lake Mary for a nature walk followed by a Refuge tour using the public tour route.

If students are participating in a field program, they will be escorted to the appropriate field site as determined by the curriculum.

Upon conclusion of the program, the students are escorted back to the Visitor Center where they receive a wrap-up and leave via the South Gate.

If it is necessary to cancel a program prior to the group's arrival, the teacher will be notified as soon as possible by phone. If it is necessary to cancel a program already in progress, the program leader will provide instructions to the group.

9.0 SPECIAL EVENTS

The published CMP target of 12 special events per year is unrealistic in the funding and staffing environment reasonably anticipated to exist throughout the life of this step-down plan. The Refuge will plan and execute two special events each year. One event will be held in October as part of the annual celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week. A second event will be conducted in the spring during the months of April - June, and may vary in theme to highlight events such as National Fishing Day, International Migratory Bird Day, or other regional or national observances. Operational plans for these events will be developed annually under the direction of the Supervisory Park Ranger for Visitor Services and approved by the Refuge Manager. The Service will continue to seek partnership with the U.S. Army, the RMA Public Affairs Sub-Committee, local communities, private organizations, and the Regional Office for the execution of special events.

Special event planning will continue to include provisions to ensure adequate control of visitors entering the perimeter fence of RMANWR to ensure visitors and private vehicles do not leave the Refuge and enter remediation areas or other Army-controlled lands.

10.0 PROGRAM STAFF

Service staff and Refuge volunteers will be present during all programs. Training on the Service's Health and Safety Plan, Incident Reporting Procedures, sections of the Integrated Contingency Plan, radio and emergency procedures will be provided to volunteers. Additionally, job specific training will be required for each program area. It is the responsibility of Service staff and Refuge volunteers to monitor, guide, and oversee each program. A weekend lead will be assigned to direct Saturday and Sunday work activities and programs.

As staffing levels increase or decrease, or as the Service deems necessary, the frequency, days, and times that programs are offered may fluctuate.

10.1 Staff Responsibilities

10.1.1 Refuge Manager

The Service's Project Leader is responsible for providing overall guidance and approval for planning and execution of the Service's public use programs at the Refuge. The Project Leader ensures that sufficient staff and material resources are allocated for the implementation of this plan, and coordinates Service activities with the Army Program Manager.

10.1.2 Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist

The Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist supervises Maintenance and Gate staff and Refuge Law Enforcement personnel, coordinates among those sections to ensure that all duty positions are covered and that public use facilities are maintained in a safe and operational condition. The Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist also coordinates with Central Dispatch, Adams County Sheriff, Fire and Emergency Services, RVO Remedy Execution, the Supervisory Park Ranger, and maintains routine contact with project managers and RVO Health and Safety regarding remedy work that may affect public use programs.

10.1.3 Supervisory Park Ranger - Visitor Services

The Supervisory Park Ranger supervises Visitor Services staff. The Supervisory Park Ranger assigns Service staff and Refuge volunteers for public use program duties, schedules work, makes assignments for, and approves action plans for individual interpretive and environmental education programs, and ensures that all assigned staff acquire the training required by this plan.

The Supervisory Park Ranger, or designee, coordinates with the Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist and the Installation On-Scene Commander (IOSC) during the weekday when programs are scheduled and at close of business Friday for weekend programs, receives notification of incidents/emergencies from Fire and Emergency Services, and is responsible for implementing program cancellation/suspension actions as required. The Supervisory Park Ranger designates a weekend Service Lead to serve as the primary point of contact for each Saturday and Sunday that public use programs are offered and assigns staff to carry out scheduled weekday programs.

10.1.4 Service Lead (Weekend)

The designated Service Lead is responsible for on-site implementation of this plan during weekend hours when the Southern Tier Public Use Area is open. The Service Lead directs and coordinates work of all personnel assigned to conduct public use programs. The Service Lead directs Saturday and Sunday work activities and programs, coordinates emergency responses (e.g., severe weather evacuations), and notifies proper authorities and Service supervisors of any emergencies or other unusual situations that arise during programs.

10.1.5 Refuge Officers

Refuge Law Enforcement Officers, including full-time and dual-function officers, patrol the Refuge at various times during public use programs to: respond to emergencies, enforce laws, apprehend and cite violators, provide public information, and provide protection for the public, wildlife, and private and government property on the Refuge.

10.1.6 Program Staff/Volunteers

Service staff and volunteers are responsible for the execution of their assigned duties, as generally described in position descriptions, as specifically prescribed in this plan, and as directed by the Service Lead, or senior supervisory personnel. Required training certifications will be maintained by staff supervisors and the Service Volunteer Coordinator.

11.0 CRITERIA and PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM SUSPENSION or CANCELLATION:

The Service can and will cancel specific public use programs or suspend all public use and visitation to RMANWR as required to maintain public safety. Pursuant to 50 CFR 25.21(e), the Refuge Manager can close the Refuge for any emergency purposes. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 also requires that all public uses of refuges be consistent with public safety.

It is anticipated that cancellation or suspension of public use programs may be required to maintain safety if one or more of the following conditions occur:

11.1 Weather

If dangerous weather conditions exist prior to visitor programs, programs will be canceled. Service staff will begin the cancellation process beginning with notification of school teachers, volunteer staff, individuals who have reservations, and they will update the Visitor Center recorded phone message. If cancellation occurs on a weekend, Visitor Services staff will ensure the South Gate is closed to vehicle traffic. If cancellation occurs on a weekday, South Gate staff will be notified.

If weather conditions arise during weekday or weekend operating hours that could potentially affect visitor safety, visitors will be directed to a safe location and visitation may be suspended. These actions may result following the receipt of National Weather Service Tornado or Severe Storm Warnings, or observation of dangerous weather conditions (tornados, lightning, blizzard conditions) by on-duty personnel.

11.2 Conditions Related to Remediation Activities at Rocky Mountain Arsenal

11.2.1 Chemical Agent

It is anticipated that this plan will be implemented following completion of remedy projects that have a potential to encounter chemical agent munitions - the last being removal of geophysical targets in the Section 36 Balance of Areas Project scheduled for completion in September 2004. Depending on the final decision involving remediation of the Lime Basins in Section 36, it may be necessary to suspend visitation during any remedial work that requires agent monitoring or excavation of Lime Basins material. That work is not anticipated to occur until at least the 2007 - 2008 time frame, and public use program plans will be adjusted at that time, as necessary, to ensure visitor safety.

In the unlikely event a suspect chemical agent munition is encountered during the work week, the Visitor Services Supervisory Park Ranger or designee will coordinate with the IOSC and appropriate personnel to confirm if the munition contains chemical agent. If confirmation is made, suspension of programs in progress or scheduled for that day will begin. Suspension of visitor programs will remain in effect until it is determined, by appropriate authorities, and in coordination with the Army, that no potential chemical agent hazard with the potential to impact public use areas exists.

11.2.2 Unexploded Ordnance

Refuge public use venues have all been deleted from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Priorities List Site, based on completion of required remedial activities. Due to the results of the Summary and Evaluation Team report of 2002, the Service has a high level of confidence that hazards from unexploded ordnance (UXO) do not exist on the Refuge. However, due to the history of this landscape, the potential for encountering munitions debris containing energetic materials cannot be dismissed. In the event of discovery of suspected or potential munitions or munitions debris on the Refuge, procedures outlined in the Interim Institutional Control Plan will be followed. These include:

- Immediately report the item to Army and request support from UXO personnel
- Refuge Officers will secure the area.
- Refuge Officers will evacuate non-response personnel and any visitors to a distance of at least 1/4 mile
- Notify the Refuge Manager or designee
- Wait for Army/UXO response and not re-open the area until the item has been cleared by qualified expert personnel

The lead Service employee present may cancel programs or suspend all visitation outside the exclusion zone radius, as deemed appropriate. Upon notification, the Refuge Manager will determine whether to lift or extend such cancellations/suspensions placed by on-duty staff.

The Service anticipates that any chemical agent-free munition that may be found on the Arsenal, outside the Refuge, will not pose any threat to personnel in the Refuge. Discovery of such items that have no chemical agent potential will not require suspension or cancellation of visitor programs. The exception to this will be if an item is located in close proximity to the Refuge/Arsenal boundary and Army/UXO personnel establish an exclusion zone that extends into the Refuge.

11.2.3 Odors and Air Quality

The only remaining remedy projects expected to produce significant odor issues are the Basin F Wastepile, and depending on final remedial decisions, Former Basin F and/or Lime Basins. Excavation of Basin F materials and transport of those materials to the Enhanced Hazardous Waste Landfill, anticipated to begin in the spring of 2006, is expected to be a challenging project in terms of odor management.

Due to lessons learned from other odorous projects (e.g. South Plants), and a project design driven by odor management, the Service expects that the RVO and its contractors will successfully achieve the requirement to produce no noticeable odors at the perimeter fence line of RMANWR. Because the location of Basin F is closer to the perimeter fence than it is to Refuge public use venues (less than one mile vs. almost two miles at the nearest point), no odors are anticipated to be detectable on the Refuge and no odor monitoring will be required for the conduct of public use programs.

If a final decision is made to excavate Lime Basins which is closer to the Refuge, this plan may be reviewed in coordination with the Army and the Regulatory Agencies (EPA, CDPHE), and TCHD to determine if odor monitoring is necessary.

Refuge outreach materials (e.g. WildNews newsletter/program schedule, Refuge web site) will inform the public of any potential future odor-generating projects planned on the Arsenal prior to project implementation. It is anticipated the RVO, TCHD and Regulatory Agency public affairs personnel will conduct extensive outreach prior to implementation of odor-generating projects.

If odor control measures fail and remedy-generated odors are detected on the Refuge, the Refuge Manager will consult with the Army, TCHD and Regulatory Agencies and will modify this plan as necessary to reduce/prevent exposure of visitors to remedy-generated odors. In the extreme, this can include actions up to and including cancellation or suspension of visitation until odors are controlled.

There are no remaining remedy projects that are anticipated to generate health and safety hazards on the Refuge through the air pathway, and no special air monitoring is expected to be required

to support public use of the Refuge. However, the Refuge Manager and Supervisory Park Ranger for Visitor Services will maintain regular communications with the RVO Air Group and adjust public use programming as necessary to ensure that visitors are not exposed to remedy-generated air quality/odor issues. Programs will be cancelled or suspended in any event upon notification that the remedy has generated, or is anticipated to generate, air pathway health hazards on the Refuge. Programs will be suspended until controls on air quality are effective and the hazard is removed.